

Robert James Talbot an August Wilhelm von Schlegel

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[1] Palace Hampton Court

July 18th 1836.

Sir

Having an opportunity of sending to Bonn, I take the liberty of presenting you, who have so eminently succeeded in naturalising our Shakespeare in the language of Germany, with a copy of [it] an attempt to render Faust in English rhymes. I am not a little ashamed of the many awkwardnesses which will be found in it, owing to its having been printed off without my knowledge, while I was upon sick bed, and before I had given it the last corrections. Should it even be reprinted, I hope, it will appear in a less slovenly condition. In the meantime, however, I have altered with a pen a few of its [2] most glossing errors. Being very anxious that a second Edition (if I might look forward to such a thing) should be as little exceptionable as possible, I venture to propose to you, Sir, a few queries, with regard to certain passages of the exact meaning of which I am in doubt; and even to hope, that you would charitably favor me, by mentioning any other mistakes; many of which doubtless you would discover, should you do me the honor of casting an eye my performance.

1st. „Die Gegenwart von einem braven Knaben“. (in the Clown's speech on the prelude on the stage.) leaves me in doubt whether the word „Gegenwart“ these means *presence*, or the *present time*.

2^{ly}. (In the first scene)

„Nur was der Augenblick erschafft, das kann er nützen“

This line is very awkwardly given in my translation. I suspect Faust alludes to *Bookknowledge* [3] and the *science* transmitted to us by our Fathers; which are of no use to us, unless we, by our own study, appropriate them to ourselves. In this view of the case, would not the passage better thus:

„That's a dull load which we do not employ,

What *we create* alone can we enjoy.“

3^{ly}. It has been suggested to me that the words (in the first scene also):

„Harmonisch all' das All“ should be „All das All“ without the apostrophe; which, I apprehend, would give them a different sense from mine.

41^y. „Mit ahnungsvoller Gegenwart“ (in the Cathedralscene). Does the word „Gegenwart“ there mean the presence of the child in the womb, or simply the *present time* or *state of things*?

I am inclined CO prefer the first.

The above are some of the passages that seem [4] to me, at this moment, as requiring your valuable assistance; but I write in a great hurry, as the person who takes charge of this leaves London to morrow morning. What adequate apology can I make to you, Sir, for this letter? but I trust you will be inclined to excuse an ardent admirer of the Faust, and one who is anxious to have the opinion of the most distinguished Critic in Europe on all literary subjects.

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your most obedient, humble Servant

Robert Talbot.

PS. I had forgotten to ask you what appear, to me as puzzling as anything else; viz; the meaning of the expression „Werdelust“ (in the Chorus of the Disciples, scene 1st.)